DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 349 190 SO 021 904

AUTHOR Brown, Naomi S.
TITLE Defining Peace Psychology and the Role of Peace Psychologists: A Survey of Division 48 Members.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association (98th, Boston, MA, August 10, 1990).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Conflict; *Conflict Resolution; *Peace; Psychological Studies; *Psychologists; *Psychology; Social Science Research; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *Peace Psychology

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in an attempt to clarify and delineate the definition of peace psychology and the role of peace psychologists. Members of Division 48 of the American Psychological Association were asked to respond to three questions: (1) What is the definition of peace psychology? (2) How is peace psychology a psychology? and (3) What does a peace psychologist do? The survey revealed that peace psychology has different meanings, different units of analyses, and different applications for different people. While a diverse range of opinions exists, there does appear to be a general consensus regarding definition and application. The definition of the field of peace psychology that emerges involves psychologists who are professionally and personally committed toward studying and promoting peace within and between all levels of human relations. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED349790

DEFINING PEACE PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ROLE OF PEACE PSYCHOLOGISTS: A SURVEY OF DIVISION 48 MEMBERS

Presented at the Division 48 Symposium on
Peace Psychology: Past, Present, and Future
American Psychological Association 98th Annual Convention
Boston, Massachusetts
August 10, 1990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Naomi S. Brown, M.A.
Pacific Graduate School of Psychology
935 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto, CA 94303
(415)494-7477

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
NAOMI S. BROWN
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 021 904

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the Pacific Graduate School of Psychology and the Ark Foundation for funding this pilot research. Without their financial support, this study would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Dr. Robert F. Morgan and Dr. Etzel Cardena for their mentorship and support. Finally, I'd like to thank Dr. James Pollyson and Dr. Janet Shoefield of Division 48 for extending their invitation to present the results of my study at this symposium.

My interest in peace psychology has been inspired by the continuing memory of my primary caretaker, Izumi-san, who died of atomic bomb disease when I was ten years old.

This study was undertaken in an attempt to clarify and delineate the definition of peace psychology and the role of peace psychologists. As a clinical psychologist in training, I have always been interested in how psychological principles could be applied in order to elucidate the dynamics that underlie conflict and conflict resolution. I strongly believed that psychologists could contribute their knowledge about human behavior in order to educate not only their clients, friends, and families, but also policy makers about the possibilities and steps toward choosing peaceful co-existence. I realized, however, that I had difficulty in defining peace psychology when asked by others. I was interested in peace from a psychological perspective, but I did not know what peace psychologists did to warrant that title. While my personal inquiry was budding, Division 48 evolved in the APA. I took the opportunity to survey members' responses to three basic questions: 1) What is the definition of peace psychology? 2) How is peace psychology a psychology? and 3) What does a peace psychologist do? Of the 725 members that were mailed the survey, 170 responded (23% response rate).

In the following analyses of results, it should be noted that response categories were defined <u>after</u> data collection and content analysis. The inter-rater response agreement for category consistency was 88%. The categories derived from each question were not mutually exclusive, thus the percentages exceed 100. Passages from the answers are quoted in order to provide the reader with a sense of the diversity in response content.

* * *

(See bar graph #1 at back)

In reply to the first question: "What is the definition of peace psychology?", 94% of the respondents replied that peace psychology involves the identification of human behaviors, cognitions, and emotions that lead to conflict and conflict resolution. This category also included those respondents who stated that peace psychology also involved the <u>application</u> of these human factors in order to promote peace. Within this category, 70% explicitly stated that they were refer-

ring to conflict and conflict resolution specifically at the international/global level. 27% also included conflict resolution at interpersonal and inter-group levels, while 3% did not specify any level at all.

For example, the respondents said that peace psychology is:

> The study of psychological dimensions of peace, war, conflict, negotiation, security and applying psychological principles in suggesting interventions and explaining political behavior/situations.
>
> The study of behavioral and cognitive processes of developing and maintaining peaceful relations among political entities.
>
> Utilizing principles of human behavior for the purpose of minimizing pain and suffering in the world (e.g., poverty, racism, homelessness, hunger) and conflicts between nations and peoples.

11% of the respondents specified that peace psychology involves the study of the causes and effects of sociocultural variables in order to understand and promote peace. For example, they stated that peace psychology is:

> The study of differences in cultures who hold peace as their highest value as compared to those who don't.
>
> Fostering cross-cultural awareness, understanding, and communication and to develop positive values about other cultures.
>
> The study of the impact of war, militarism, and nuclear annihilation on societies; on children, youth, and families.

9% of the respondents specified that peace psychology involves the study of those factors which affect the individual's ability to attain inner peace. For example, they stated that peace psychology involves:

> The study of how individuals attain peace of mind.
>
> The investigation and practice of those aspects of human development that affect one's capacity to be a loving, self-realized being.
>
> Developing strategies for helping individuals establish enduring self-esteem, the result of which is a reduction in intra and interpersonal conflict.

5% of the responses did not fall into the above categories, thus were labeled as "other." For example, these respondents stated that peace psychology involves:

> Addressing human beings' essential nature and one's relationship to creation.
>
> Studying relationships between the quest for peace and the evolution of human consciousness.

3% of the respondents replied that peace psychology is a misnomer and should be subsumed under some other discipline.

The definition of peace psychology, then, appears to embrace many meanings which range from the abstract-philosophical to a more concrete-operational level. The unit of analysis also encompasses many levels which range from the intrapsychic to the international, suggesting the necessity of individual as well as political change that is required for the cause of peace. It is also evident that a large part of peace psychology's direction and mission is focused outward, specifically on international conflict resolution and peace issues.

(See bar graph #2)

In response to the second question: "How is peace psychology a psychology (versus, e.g., other social, political, and civil approaches to peace)?", 70% of the respondents replied that peace psychology is a psychology because it is based upon psychological principles derived from scientific research methodology in investigating and understanding those human factors that promote peace and conflict. For example, these respondents stated peace psychology is a psychology because:

> It's the scientific study of peace phenomena and does not constitute the advocacy of political action.
>
> It uses empirical psychological research to understand strategies and ideas for the promotion of peace, as opposed to strictly peoples' opinions.

31% of the respondents specified that peace psychology is a psychology because its focus is on the individual and on personality factors related to peaceful versus violent behavior. For example, these respondents stated that peace psychology is a psychology because:

> It studies the cognitive problems of decision makers, especially in crisis.
>
> It studies personality factors that promote peace or its opposite.
>
> Because ultimately, it's the study of the individual and how s/he makes choices about values and behavior related to peace and violence/war.

9% responded that peace psychology is not "officially" a psychology, but is multidisciplinary or a branch of another field. For example, they stated that peace psychology:

> Includes aspects of social psychology, spirituality, communication, and international relations.

Is a sub-discipline of social psychology that studies peace issues.

Is a branch of political psychology.

Is multidisciplinary--we cooperate with all other disciplines, especially other social sciences.

3% of the responses did not fall into the above categories, thus were labeled as "other."

These results suggest that it is primarily our scientific methodology, scholarship, theory, and psychological perspective that separates us from the political, social, and civil approaches to peace; that the latter groups are often marked by activism and strong moral and ethical opinions and attitudes which are not necessarily driven by objective scientific investigations.

In both question 1 and 2, it is evident that a small proportion of respondents felt that peace psychology is a misnomer and should be subsumed under another discipline or be multidisciplinary. This may reflect, in part, some of the respondents' lack of clarity as to how the domain of Peace Psychology differs from and is independent of "neighbor" disciplines such as Humanistic, Social, Political, and Military Psychology.

****

(see bar graph #3)

In response to the third question: "What does a peace psychologist do (if not already covered, what do you do as a peace psychologist) ?", 64% of the respondents replied that a peace psychologist engages in research relevant to peace issues. For example:

I am primarily a peace researcher since I believe we have an awful lot to learn before action and education become very effective.

> One carefully trained in psychological research who can take an unbiased approach to the study of war and peace with the intent of defining human behaviors which promote peace versus war.

55% of the respondents replied that a peace psychologist is a social/political activist. For example:

> A peace psychologist participates in mass rallies, fundraising, and political campaigns for furthering of world peace.

> A peace psychologist utilizes the science and profession of psychology to influence public policy.

> I take political action in a variety of ways to further the pursuit of peace.

45% of the respondents replied that a peace psychologist is an educator. For example:

> I teach courses on peace, war, cross-cultural awareness, and conflict resolution to my undergraduate psychology students.

> I teach teachers about teaching peace to children.

> I organize faculty colloquia on peace issues and stimulate colleagues to give peace-related courses.

42% of the respondents replied that a peace psychologist is a therapist. For example:

> What I do as a peace psychologist is to effect through my therapy a deeper understanding in people of their own violence (toward spouses, children, animals, etc.) and what other alternatives they have. I believe peace must begin in the home.

I counsel children who are frightened of nuclear war.

I work with clients to help them attain inner peace.

30% of the respondents replied that a peace psychologist is an individual who is dedicated to peace on a personal level. For example:

I live my life in such a way as to serve others and to help offer more loving, peaceful solutions to the problems of living.

I try to live an active, peaceful life.

I meditate about peace.

I give a lot of thought to peace.

I pray for the peace and harmony of the world.

5% of the respondents replied that they write and publish materials pertaining to peace issues. For example:

I do theoretical writing about nuclear war attitudes.

I write book reviews on books addressing peace.

I write articles and commentaries on social-political action and peace issues.

5% of the responses did not fall into the above categories and were thus labeled as "other." For example:

I try not to hit anyone.

I'm not sure what I do as a peace psychologist--hope to find out more at the Division 48 meeting.

The results to this question suggest that the peace psychologist has many roles which often overlap into several areas of professional and personal life. It is interesting to note that a considerable number of respondents specified that a peace psychologist is defined not only by virtue of a professional role, but also as an individual who models peaceful behavior, attitudes, and values in private life. The average response to this question qualified in at least two categories. The sense of personal commitment and dedication toward peace as expressed in the responses was most impressive.

* * *

DISCUSSION

The results from this survey point out some interesting and unexpected findings, in addition to generating some new questions about peace psychology.

Of the 170 respondents, 35% were women and 65% were men. I questioned whether there could be any discernable gender difference to the pattern of responses. Specifically, I asked whether women might tend to focus on more internal levels of peace, for example, within and between individuals and small groups, while men might tend to focus on more external levels such as national and international conflict resolution. I also questioned whether peace psychology, when defined as a spiritual construct, might be more endorsed by women; likewise, whether peace psychology, when defined as a political construct, might be more endorsed by men. Based on this sample of responses, I discovered that there were virtually no differences in response content between women and men, except for the fact that men used the words "science of" more ($p < .05$), while women used the words "study of" or "investigation of" to express the same thought.

It appears that a large part of peace psychology's direction and mission is focused outward, specifically on international conflict resolution and peace issues. I was surprised to find that there was not at least an

equal amount of emphasis on less global levels of peace-making, specifically those that addressed racial and gender relations, prejudice, and oppression as it occurs within our own country between individuals and groups. Of the 170 respondents, only five people referred to intra-national racism and prejudice as a critical issue that must be included in the domain of peace psychology. Similarly, only one person referred to gender relations. Given that racism, sexism, and all other forms of prejudice are oppressive forces that dehumanize human beings, I would have expected to find more responses that addressed these issues and was surprised that it did not.

Given that the majority of respondents are endorsing global peace issues as the domain of peace psychology, this raises the interesting question of whether peace psychology can or should remain independent of international politics. And to the extent that there is an involvement in international politics, what should the nature of that involvement be?

27% of the respondents defined peace psychology as identifying and applying psychological principles that promoted peace and reduced conflict on a variety of levels which ranged from the intrapsychic to the international. This raises the question of whether the same psychological principles that operate to resolve conflicts, for example, between a couple, could be applied to resolving conflicts between nations. Is this really the case? Are peace psychology theories and principles that generalizable and truly centrifugal in application?

Finally, the results from this study suggest that peace psychology is most defined by its scientific identity. Traditional science dictates that we are free of ideology, that our job as social scientists is to report the truth as observed and not to advocate one set of values over another. Viewed from this perspective, it appears that social/political activism contradicts our role as social scientists. The responses to this study indicate, however, that of those respondents who clearly expressed the view as to whether or not peace psychology involves some form of active promotion of peace or

conflict resolution, 76% expressed the view that it does. The following are passages quoted from respondents who view the peace psychologist as an activist:

> The peace psychologist is an activist and engages in research that is beneficial to the cause of peace and harmony among peoples of the world.
>
> The aim of peace psychology should be to bring about a world in which people are socialized to believe that all disagreements between individuals, groups, and societies can be resolved without the need to inflict mortal damage on each other.
>
> Peace psychology utilizes the science and profession of psychology to influence public policy.
>
> The study of psychological issues in terminating wars (specific and general) and establishing a system of the world without armed conflict among groups of people.

In contrast, 24% explicity stated that peace psychology, as a science, should attempt to be free of ideology and activism. For example:

> Peace psychology is the scientific study of phenomena and as such does not constitute advocacy or political action. Both of these, of course, may utilize findings of peace psychology.
>
> Peace psychology's intention is to contribute to knowledge as distinct from action advocacy.
>
> Peace psychology is based, or should be based on "principles of human behavior," which are derived from scientific study. Therefore, peace psychology should be beyond political and social movements, free of ideology as much as possible.

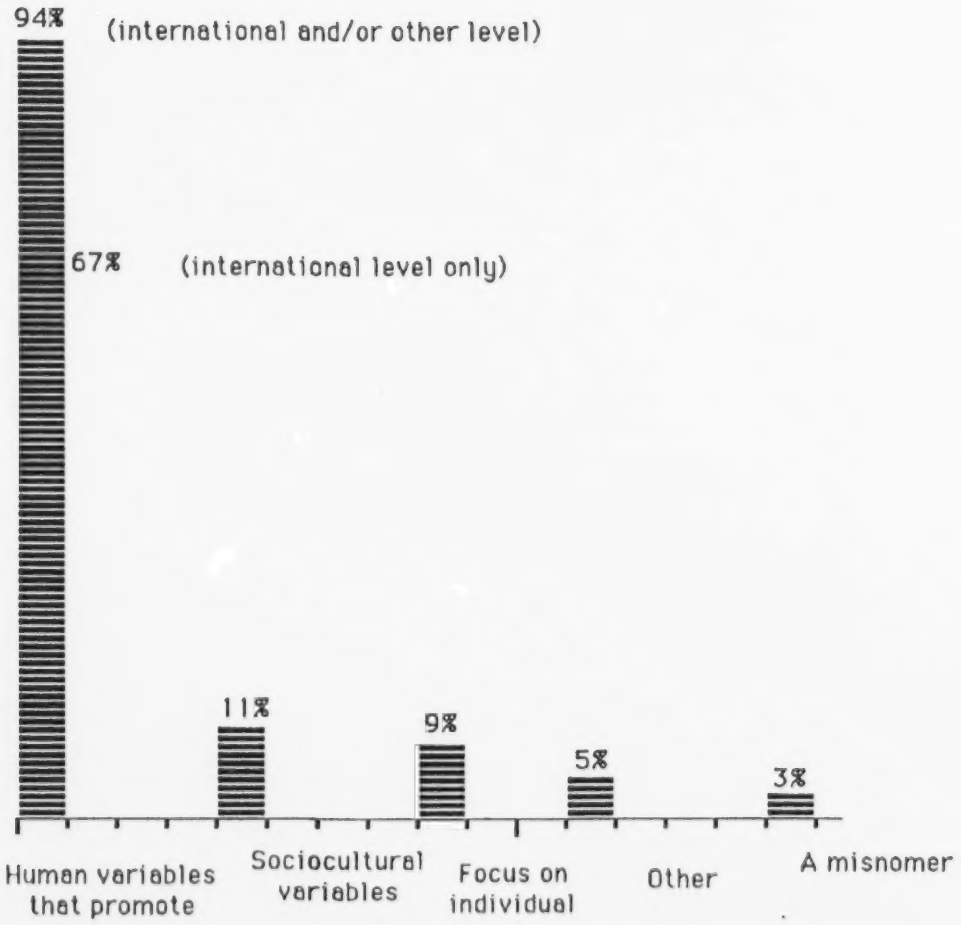
Based on these results, one may ask whether it is desirable for a particular discipline, in this case, peace psychology, to be both scientific in nature and to involve social/political activism which intends to bring about changes in the world.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

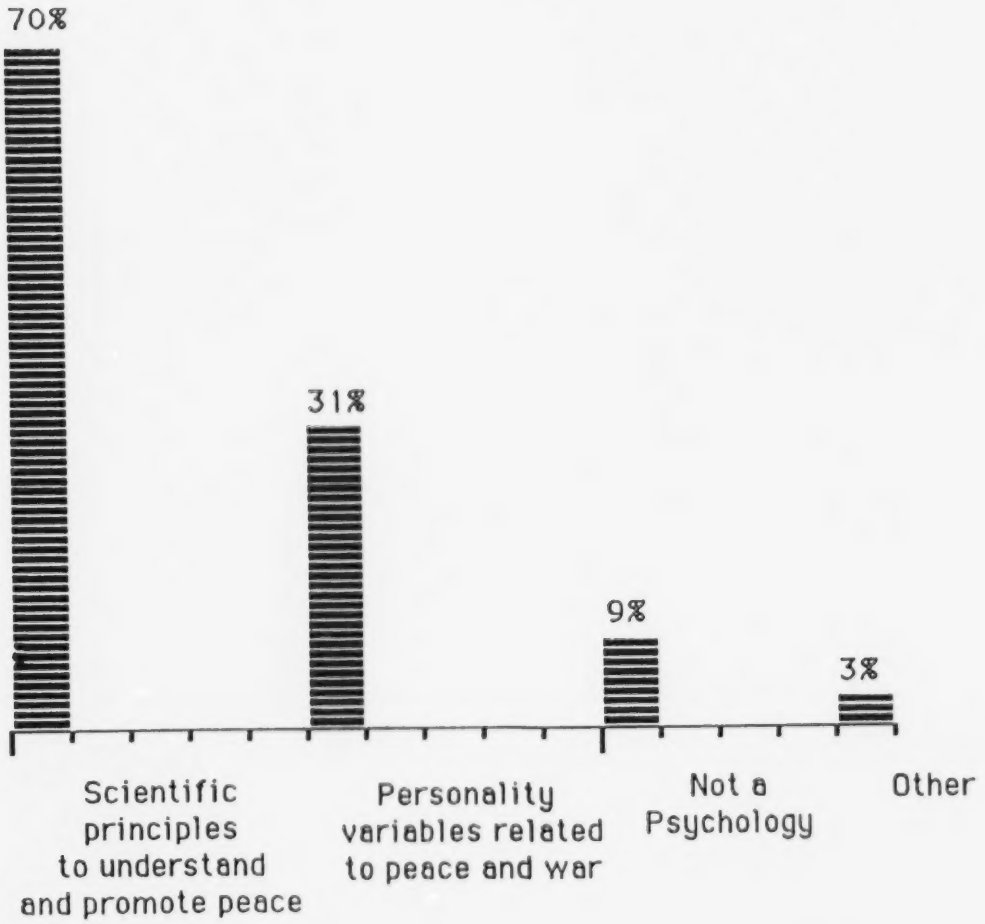
This study taught me why I had initially had so much difficulty defining peace psychology. What I learned, specifically from the survey respondents, is that peace psychology has different meanings, different units of analyses, and different applications for different people. Although the diversity of opinions may preclude a focused and concise definition of peace psychology at this time, there does appear to be a general consensus regarding definition and application.

If someone were to ask me now: "So, what is peace psychology,?" I would say that peace psychology involves psychologists who are professionally and personally commited toward studying and promoting peace within and between all levels of human relations. Any more would probably lose the listener; any less would not do justice to the diverse views that comprise its meaning.

DEFINITION OF PEACE PSYCHOLOGY



HOW IS PEACE PSYCHOLOGY A PSYCHOLOGY?



WHAT DO PEACE PSYCHOLOGISTS DO?